

layout for living

- 1948 conferences
- neighbourhood unit:
world-wide views
- planning books

Miss M.F. Price,
Library, Central Mortgage & Housing Corp.,
Room 438, #4 Bldg.,
Ottawa, Ont.

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regional citizens' planning conferences

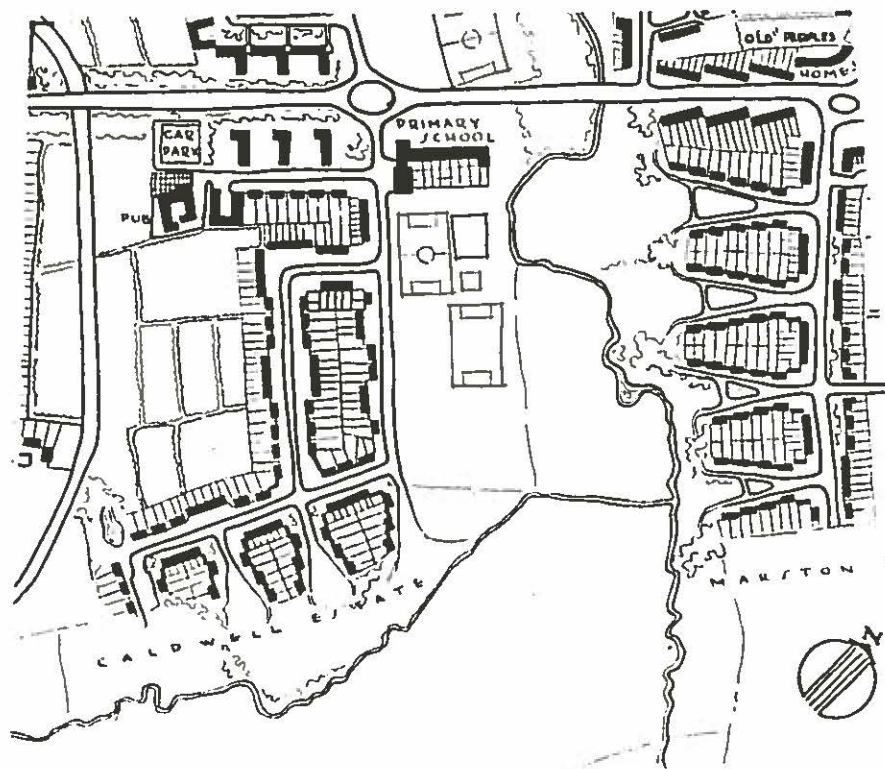
As the postman brings this issue, CPAC officers in several Divisions will be well ahead with arrangements for the provincial annual general meetings called for in our by-laws. These meetings of Members are essential for the orderly conduct of CPAC business, and for the selection and guidance of those who will assume the leading shares in CPAC's work for the next twelve months. Further (as last year's national annual meeting made plain) the gathering of our Members into one room can widen our understanding of the human gains possible—and the man-made obstacles present—in the way of planning. By lively first-hand exchange of facts and views we come to see that our local planning problem has its fellows elsewhere—the same kinds of causes, of stubbornness, and perhaps of solution.

In this wide land, more people can share in such meetings if they are arranged regionally in 1948. Accordingly aid has been offered to Divisions for Regional Conferences. Our object in CPAC is not only to absorb planning information (which is privately satisfactory) but also to broadcast it (which is publicly desirable). We therefore believe that our object will be better served by a number of conferences across the country, because the commotions they stir up will be within earshot of many more Canadians. The kinds of aid offered by the national office have been outlined to Divisional Officers and described in earlier issues of this bulletin.

Possibly what is said here looks like pious hopes. So it would be, were it not for the leaders in Quebec who have already done a pathfinder job in staging a 1948 regional conference. A brief account of their success appears in the middle pages of this issue. Planning events in Sillery filled five days in March; total attendance was larger than at our 1947 national conference. Council may be pardoned for regarding the hopes for 1948 as roundly vindicated.

For the rest of us, the achievement in Quebec contains both lesson and challenge. The *Semaine Provinciale d'Urbanisme* has been made of elements that we have in every region: (1) a seat of government to be refitted; (2) an expanding educational institution needing space; (3) a new local authority's planning scheme; (4) large-scale housing projects; (5) a meeting of municipal officials; (6) a cordial relationship with press and radio people; (7) a modest sum of money; (8) an abundant supply of human energy and imagination. The evidence that similar raw materials for success are present in every part of Canada need not be spelled out. The evidence that these resources will not be wasted in 1948 is contained in the announcements of Regional Conferences printed herein.

community planning association of canada, ottawa



a short anthology:

We take heart in these times to find agreement around this one world when it comes to constructive tasks. Whatever press association and others would have us believe, there are beneath the clamour of would-be destroyers many broad chords of agreement among the peoples' builders. For instance, in the rebuilding of large old towns and the building of new ones, planners everywhere agree on the neighbourhood unit idea. Almost every issue of LAYOUT FOR LIVING has mentioned the concept. What follows here is meant to round out a bit our picture of the neighbourhood unit.

You may want to test for yourself how widespread are these constructive common convictions. We are therefore going to let you try to identify the country of origin of each quotation. To check your answers, the authors are named in the order of their appearance on page 5.

the neighbourhood unit

1 For the sociologist, the neighbourhood means a group of families in conjunction with a particular locality.

From this locality group emerge the folkways, social institutions, forms and rights of property and of government, activities of work and recreation, education, religion and welfare.

Today the neighbourhood as a locality group has all but disappeared from the urban scene. One of the most unfortunate consequences of excessive urbanization has been the loss of community interests which form the basis of the neighbourhood. While our system of government is based on the assumption that people living in the same locality have interests in common, and that they may be relied upon to act together for the common welfare, this assumption, unfortunately, is invalid for large cities. Mobility, lack of home ownership, and distance, the distinguishing marks of large urban centres, all have contributed to the disappearance of the neighbourhood as an entity possessing social values.

The loss of neighbourhood values has further repercussions. Studies in socially disorganized areas reveal physical and economic, as well as moral deterioration.

It must be borne in mind that the deteriorated neighbourhood is an economic, as well as a social liability. This fact is so universal that the whole field of modern urban planning and development is concentrated in finding satisfactory solutions for its rehabilitation.

In the present day urban development, the neighbourhood is considered as the smallest natural basic unit of planning operations. It is an area within the scope and interest of a pre-adolescent child. Its size is likely to be determined by the convenient walking distance for children between the farthest house and the school and playground in which most of their activities are focused.

Realizing this, the neighbourhood unit principle was put forth, not as a detailed plan applicable for all localities, but as statement of principles and norms relative to certain functions of residential communities.

In the development of the town in the past, we have expanded the physical plan recklessly, and treated the essential social nucleus, the organs of Government, Education and Social Services, as mere afterthoughts. Today, we finally have realized that the social nucleus is the essential element in every community plan. The locations and interrelationships of schools, libraries, theatres, community centres, churches and shopping areas with Housing and Industry is our first consideration in shaping the growth of our towns and rural areas.

The neighbourhood unit principle in planned urban development was first defined by Clarence A. Perry, of the Russell Sage Foundation, in 1921. It is today recognized by the planners as applicable not only to the new suburbs or towns, but also to re-planned slum areas.

The principal points in such a planned Neighbourhood Unit as formulated by Perry are:

- 1. SIZE**—A residential unit development should provide housing for that population for which one elementary school is ordinarily required, its actual area depending upon its population density.
- 2. BOUNDARIES**—The unit should be bounded on all sides by arterial streets, sufficiently wide to facilitate its by-passing, instead of penetration, by through traffic.
- 3. OPEN SPACES**—A system of small parks and recreation spaces, planned to meet the needs of the particular neighbourhood, should be provided.
- 4. INSTITUTION SITES**—Sites for the school and other institutions having service spheres coinciding with the limits of the unit should be suitably grouped about a central point or common.
- 5. LOCAL SHOPS**—One or more shopping districts, adequate for the population to be served, should be laid out in the circumference of the unit, preferably at traffic junctions and adjacent to similar districts of adjoining neighbourhoods.
- 6. INTERNAL STREET SYSTEMS**—The unit should be provided with a special street system, each highway being proportioned to its probable traffic load, the street net as a whole being designed to facilitate circulation within the unit, and to discourage its use by through traffic.

Several neighbourhoods grouped logically to form a community will require facilities in addition to those needed by the individual neighbourhood.

It is obvious from these requirements, that a lonely subdivision at the fringe of the city, or a group of houses arranged according to some fancy pattern on a city block, is not a neighbourhood.

In classifying neighbourhoods, we shall distinguish between two types: one in which residence is determined on the basis of personal choice, and the other where occupancy is the result of economic compulsion. We are envisioning for the future, more neighbourhoods of the first type. These may be developed in new areas or in the older, built-up areas.

There is a general consensus of opinion among modern planners, that, if the city is to be brought back to the human scale, it must be reshaped into a pattern of smaller communities. This principle of a metropolitan pattern composed of reasonably self-contained communities possessing their own social, cultural and public facilities, has been adopted in many large centres. Under such a plan the present heterogeneous, undifferentiated structure of the city, would be transformed over a long period of years into a group of neighbourhoods.

The size of such neighbourhoods will vary, being influenced by the pattern of existing through streets and by such physical barriers as industries, railroads, water and large parks. The ultimate size of each neighbourhood may, however, be limited by the number of

families whose children will fill an efficiently-run school. The ideal neighbourhood unit may then be considered as being between a half-mile and a mile across, and as having a population of from four to eight thousand. For, within this area and serving this population, an elementary school can serve best and most economically.

In any planning scheme in which neighbourhoods are involved, it is well to keep in mind the character of the neighbourhood. It is that area within which, for whatever reasons, a spirit of neighbourliness exists, and in which people do not feel strange. While these feelings can be fostered by physical planning, it alone cannot create them. If we are going to rehabilitate our cities, we must go far deeper than planning for safe side streets, sewers and protective greenbelts, engineering feats and architectural pleasantries.

Lewis Mumford in *The Culture of Cities* sums up the need for planning on a neighbourhood scale: "A community that does not plan and build the necessary structures for the common life, will remain under a perpetual weight and handicap; its buildings may tower against the skies, but its actual social structure may be smaller than a country town." But, besides the necessary structures for the common life, we need more. The physical planning of new neighbourhoods is only part of the way of encouraging neighbourliness, common interests and a common life. Social, cultural and recreational plans, and the inculcation of community values, are also necessary.

2 In rehabilitating our cities we are trying to make each district self-contained. Town planners are endeavouring to make it possible for each citizen to find everything he needs locally, in the district where he resides. We do not consider it right that children should have to walk more than about five-eighths of a mile to school. They certainly should not have to cross busy streets. Every district should have its own centre with its gardens, sports grounds, department stores, markets, medical institutions, cinemas, theatres and libraries—in a word, everything the citizen needs in his daily life.

All these district centres, as a rule, are connected with each other by a network of circular and radial roads well planted with trees and greenery. These arteries for busy traffic—on which the speed of vehicles will be restricted as little as possible—do not cross the district centres but by-pass them.

3 The principle behind the idea of the urban neighbourhood must be not merely to break down the large town into units of a size which allow a full growth of community spirit and neighbourhood feeling, but to ensure that its redevelopment takes place in such a way that each unit, while still essentially but a single part of a greater whole, becomes a comprehensible entity in itself...

The most usual existing limits of neighbourhoods are barriers, such as railway lines and main highways, to which should be added those formed by open space...

The desirable size for a neighbourhood unit is a population not exceeding 10,000 persons living in an

continued on page six



a successful conference

At the Fifth Meeting of the CPAC Council, it was agreed that the Association should plan in 1948 to hold regional conferences in the Maritimes, French Canada, Ontario, the Prairie Provinces and B.C.

The Quebec City Branch of CPAC has already set the pace with Planning Week which was held in Sillery—close to Quebec City—from March 15th to 19th.

program

Monday, March 15

8.30 P.M.:—Opening, General Assembly

Aims of the week:

Presentation of the ARGO exhibit **YOUR CITY AND YOU**.

Film strip on planning; Commentator: Mr. Roland Bédard, planner.

Tuesday, March 16

P.M.: Visit to the exhibition by students of colleges and schools.

Dinner given by City of Sillery to the Directors of "L'Union des Maires et des Municipalités" and to CPAC officials.

Presentation of the master plan for the future development of Sillery.

8.30 p.m.—Address by Mr. Jean Cimon, joint national secretary of CPAC on the aims and functions of the Association.

Film on planning.

Wednesday, March 17

8.30 p.m. Presentation of the "Service Provincial de l'Urbanisme".

Speech by Mr. Burroughs Pelletier, of the "Service Provincial de l'Urbanisme".

Film on planning.

Thursday, March 18

P.M.: Presentation of the ARGO exhibition to Laval University students.

8.30 p.m. Presentation of the master plan for Laval's future "Cité Universitaire".

Speech by an officer of Laval University in connection with this plan.

Film on planning.

Friday, March 19

8.30 p.m. Speech on "L'Art Urbain" by Mr. Edouard Fiset, architect.

Meeting of all the CPAC delegates and members.

Resolutions and closing of the week.

Saturday, March 20

Exhibitions open to the public in the afternoon and evening.

It will be useful to other regions to analyze the organizational background of this planning conference. With a few hundred dollars this Branch has managed to achieve a congress with province-wide impact. How did they proceed?

The first step in their organizational program was to interest and integrate in the conference all planning activities under way in Quebec City and vicinity. For instance, this CPAC Branch decided to set aside a day of their planning conference for the Town Planning Bureau of the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs. This was all the more timely because of Premier Duplessis' recent interest in planning the provincial capital. Thus the Provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and two deputies were directly involved and consequently took an active part in this CPAC conference. There was another day devoted to the future "Cité Universitaire" a large planning project for a new campus for Laval University to be built in Sillery and adjoining Ste. Foye. There were also the showing of maps, the ARGO exhibit (Your City and You), an exhibit by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and some studies for the planning of the National Capital District. The idea was that the wide local publicity already centred around these projects could afford an ideal opportunity to introduce CPAC aims to the general public.

The time of the conference was set by a meeting of the Board of Directors of the "Union des Maires et des Municipalités" of the Province of Quebec, to be held in Sillery. Thanks to Messrs. Eugène Chalifour and André Duval of CPAC, and to Mayor Roméo Paquet of Sillery, the CPAC Branch in Quebec City managed to arrange a joint planning conference in the town-hall of Sillery, together with the meeting of the "Union des Maires et des Municipalités". Mayor Paquet of Sillery was so enthused with the idea that he extended 800 invitations for a joint dinner with CPAC officials. Almost every mayor in the Province of Quebec was invited. The invitation cards sent to the English-speaking mayors were worded as follows: "The City of Sillery and the Community Planning Association of Canada invite you to come and visit the Community Planning Exhibition to be held from March 15th to March 19th, 1948, at the City Hall of Sillery".

Because of the many displays of maps and pictures utilized as basic material to be shown to the general public during this planning week, it was necessary to have two exhibitions in separate buildings. The Memorial Hall, located just four minutes walk from the Town Hall of Sillery, was used to install the ARGO exhibit (Your City and You) and also served for public meetings and the showing of films—in both languages—on community planning. In the Council Chamber of the Town Hall of Sillery were displayed some very attractive maps, graphs and pictures illustrating a master plan for the immediate development of Sillery. Mr. Eugène Chalifour's neighbourhood unit project, the future "Cité Universitaire" of Laval University, and some studies for the National Capital.

There were disadvantages in having an exhibition located in two separate buildings. Every night, the

crowd was so interested in examining and discussing the maps and charts shown in the Town Hall, that they almost forgot to attend the public lecture and the showing of films in progress at the same time in Memorial Hall. But a severe criticism would be inappropriate, bearing in mind that it is usually too expensive for a local CPAC Branch to secure a very large hall, especially if the planning conference is to last a whole week as it did in Sillery.

The local newspapermen gave time and keen support to the CPAC Planning Week. Every day during the whole week, all the newspapers devoted at least a full column of their leading local news page to the conference. (The clippings received so far total some 700 inch-columns). There were three six-minute talks on the CBC's Quebec City Station, and a report on "La Revue de l'Actualité" (The CBC French Network's "News Round-Up"). At the end of the planning week, Mr. Edouard Fiset, architect and assistant to Mr. Greber in Ottawa, was invited to speak at a local club luncheon, and his speech was broadcast in its entirety by a local radio station.

The Quebec City Branch of CPAC hired a secretary-publicist for the duration of the planning week. This secretary was on duty every evening, giving information and distributing pamphlets on planning matters.

It would seem superfluous to add further comment on this effort. The Quebec City Branch of CPAC has shown us that it is possible to achieve a very successful planning conference with little money and much initiative.

—Jean CIMON

the authors on neighbourhoods

see page two

1. *Dr. Eugenio Faludi* born in Hungary, trained and practised as an architect in Italy. He cites American sources of the neighbourhood unit theory in his paper—which was prepared for the 1947 National Conference on Community Planning in Montreal, but not given there owing to program exigencies. Dr. Faludi is Managing Director of Town Planning Consultants Limited of Toronto, and Secretary of the Institute of Professional Town Planners.
2. *Lee Rudner* is a prominent Soviet architect, and a Member of the Academy of Architecture of the U.S.S.R.
3. *The Dudley Report: Design of Dwellings* issued by the British Ministry of Health; supplement prepared by a group of officers of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning in 1944, on "Site Planning and Layout in Relation to Housing."
4. *Clifford A. Meadows* is an engineer in private practice in Toronto. These notes are based on his paper given at the invitation of the Engineering Institute before the Neighbourhood Planning Group of the 1947 National Conference on Community Planning. The full text appears in the *Engineering Journal* for November 1947.
5. *Frederick Gibberd* made these comments in reference to Harlow New Town (one of those planned under the New Towns Act of 1946). Mr. Gibberd was formerly Principal of the school of the Architectural Association in London, and is planning consultant to the Harlow New Town Corporation. He has practised architecture in London for 15 years, and prepared the Nuneaton extension plan of which a part is shown on page two.

1948 regional conferences

Members in the Hamilton area may wish to attend the 11th Biennial Canadian Conference on Social Work to be held in the Royal Connaught June 8-11. A session on housing and planning on June 11 will be arranged by CPAC. Apply: Room 410, Imperial Building Hamilton, Ont.

maritimes

Date: June 21

Place: Nova Scotian Hotel, Halifax

Program: *Hugh Kennerly* of Westchester, N.Y.

George Mooney of CPAC's Council

Provincial & Municipal Officials

will speak

Displays, Films, Housing Projects

will be exhibited and visited

CPAC's Challenge in 1948-49

will be debated by CPAC Members

Conference

Secretary: J. E. Flynn.

21 Seymour Street,

Halifax, N.S.

ontario

Date: late September

Convenor: James Dutton.

225 Stewart Street,

Peterborough, Ont.

prairies

Date: Autumn 1948.

british columbia

Date: October (to be announced)

Place: University of B.C., Vancouver

(watch LAYOUT FOR LIVING for details.)

other conferences and courses

Land Subdivision Macdonald College, P.Q.
May 31 to June 9, 1948.

Housing & Planning Zurich, Switzerland.
June 20 to June 26, 1948.

Geography School Stanstead College, P.Q.
July 5 to August 14, 1948.

Community Programs Camp Laquemac, P.Q.
August 13 to 23, 1948.

films

Programmers are reminded that 15 films were listed in LAYOUT FOR LIVING No. 3; copies of this list are available from the CPAC Office. Also recommended:

Arteries of the City 10 minutes, 16 mm. Black & White sound. Encyc. Brit. with Robt. Lynd. Excellent animated analysis of big-city problems.

Dover—Spring 1947 10 minutes, 16 mm. B. & W. sound. Data Films for UK Govt. War-ravaged city, not able to build so fast as ours, yet determined to plan more carefully.

Inquire: National Film Society,
172 Wellington Street, Ottawa.

Special rates in some cases for CPAC Branches

the neighbourhood unit

—from page three

area where every house is easily accessible to the neighbourhood centre . . .

Within the neighbourhood a variety of dwellings should be provided so that the neighbourhood is made up of several minor groups of development and kinds of dwellings. A desirable size for the minor groups is of 100-300 families . . .

A neighbourhood open space system should be closely related to the dwellings. There should be a park pattern which would also provide a system of safe pedestrian ways . . . Primary schools and nursery schools should be near to the centre of the residential area they serve . . . Every house should have shops within a quarter-of-a-mile's walking distance.

4 We have check-lists of neighbourhood components: dwellings, schools, shops, playgrounds, churches, and ways for people, goods, water, power and waste to enter and leave all parts of the area.

The most vital of these factors is the people for whom the rest is made. Where do they work? What kinds of incomes do they earn? What sizes are their families? How many have cars? What class of public service can they support? What types of dwellings do they want? What type of tenancy do they expect? What can they afford? Most of these questions must be separately canvassed in each case.

The other set of factors unique in each case relate to the land. What is its relation to the city as a whole? To main employment areas? What is its topography? What are the prevailing winds locally? How is it to be drained?

Given a knowledge of the people and the land, a number of standards can be applied to secure a solution:

(a) *Density* Gross Densities in ancient and modern cities have ranged from 450 to less than 10 persons per acre. Net densities in (for instance) Knoxville, Fort Worth and Vancouver average 38.4 persons per acre.

(b) *Lot Sizes* Our Government suggests the following standards:

Where served with piped water and sewer	5,000 sq. ft.
Where safe water is available other than from wells on the property	7,500 sq. ft.
Where well and septic tank are needed on site	12,000 sq. ft.

The lot width is a compromise between amplitude (for outdoor living and orientation of dwelling), and cost (of services, upkeep and snow removal).

(c) <i>Population Breakdown by Age-groups</i>	Average figures in this area:	
Age-group	% of Total Population	
	Rural	Urban
1-5	9.23	7.42
6-10	9.29	7.70
11-13	5.66	4.94
14-20	12.57	12.10

(d) *Size of Elementary Education Unit* Optimum number of pupils at each level per school is subject of varying

views by education authorities. Minima might be regarded as:

Kindergarten	125 pupils per school unit
Primary	450 " " " "
Secondary	1350 " " " "

Simple calculations from the age composition, lot sizes (or densities) and these optima will show what is the furthest distance any child must walk to school. There are obvious practical limits.

(e) *Area of School Sites* For units of the above sizes, the school ground areas should be of the order of 1½ acres, 5 acres and 10 acres respectively.

(f) *Other Playground Areas* These depend upon access to open spaces near the neighbourhood, and upon standards accepted by local recreation authorities (who should be consulted).

(g) *Streets and Roads* Assessment of the uses to which each road will be put, and design tending to protect it from alien uses, is better practice than wholesale application of the Surveyor's chain (66 feet). We have much to learn about design for good drainage in all weathers, and for easy snow removal. Especially is this true as we lay out streets specifically to serve dwellings, or for shopping, or as through arteries—all with different access and load requirements.

Parking needs can be gauged, in commercial, recreational or residential roads. Goods should all enter from lanes rather than from public streets. Traffic wishing only to go beyond the neighbourhood should never be let into it at all, but should be routed around.

(h) *Set Back of Buildings* Tangibles of lighting and breeze, as well as intangibles of appearance, are guides.

(i) *Investment per Person* Much study is needed here; the possible limits of local investment in fixtures and services in relation to the income of the residents ought to be calculable.

In closing, we should note the new provisions whereby insurance companies are authorized to buy land and install services for the lots into which they subdivide it. In part this is recognition of the financial straits of our municipal governments; in part too it is a reflection of the sorry over-extension practised by those governments in the distant past, and their default more recently. Local governments must *plan*.

5 The reasons have been established elsewhere for arranging housing areas as a series of distinct neighbourhood units. Aesthetically, this distinction must go further than just dividing up low density housing groups by parkway strips. It is a town that has to be created, not a series of independent villages. If the landscape is learnt and felt and the building groups designed into it, the landscape pattern itself will form a structural framework which will fuse together the built-up areas of the town.

The various systems of communication about the town have very important aesthetic implications, not as lineal patterns on paper (although an ordered pattern

may be sensed even though it may not be seen in totality), but because from them a series of pictorial scenes are viewed, and because as paths of movement they form important visual incidents in the landscape.

For the pedestrian quite different design principles apply. The footpath makes no visual disturbance in the landscape, and the prospects from it can be of infinite variety. If the usual practice of siting footpaths along the routes of roads is abandoned and the path is regarded as a design element in its own right, it is possible to get the maximum sensory effect. Existing lanes and footpaths will be incorporated in the design, and by linking the footpath system with the green wedges it will be possible for the inhabitants to walk out of the town from their own neighbourhood without traversing any other area of bricks and mortar.

Some interesting problems arise in the design of the suburbs, or, to use the more fashionable term, the neighbourhood units. To obtain contrast with the landscape compactness is desirable. It is almost impossible to obtain this with large neighbourhoods of ten to fifteen thousand people without their becoming dull. Furthermore, such large units make it necessary to take a bus to get about them, and this at once gives a sense of leaving one's particular area. It can be argued, therefore, that the size of the neighbourhood should be prescribed by an easy walking distance, say ten minutes walk, or a quarter of a mile. This brings the size down to five thousand people or less. Certainly existing towns point to this smaller unit, for in them such a service as the local shopping centre almost invariably occurs within easy walking distance.

Apart from the question of the appearance of individual houses both unity and variety can be achieved by developing and incorporating the spatial qualities and textures of the topography into the design. Instead of leaving vast neighbourhood units to be subsequently worked out at "twelve to the acre", the town planner must study the existing landscape pattern, the existing building groups, and show how the new housing is to be related to them. By this integration of new with old the inhabitants will have roots with the past and not be so conscious of living in a brand new environment.

(See authors' names on page five.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

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Information Committee

Executive Director: Alan H. Armstrong

Room 147, 56 Lyon Street, Ottawa, Canada

The object of the Association is "to foster public understanding of, and participation in, community planning in Canada". Much of the effort for orderly community development must be locally centred. Members in any province are therefore encouraged to form a Provincial Division, and within it to form local Branches of the Association.



books received

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X-ray the city: the density diagram: basis for urban planning. Melbourne, the author, 1946.

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